Performer in Uniform by Karin Jaroszynska

ART

KARIN JAROSZYNSKA, Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg. Tel: (011) 788-4805.

She has always been appreciated for the subtlety of her insight, and Jaroszynska's new paintings are a tremendous vindication of that reputation. Here she focuses almost relentlessly on the human being. Without pretence and with almost surgical brilliance she reveals naked inner character in great depth.

The paintings are close to monochromatic. The narrow, stage-like space she has always favoured pushes the figures forward into our attention. Often the backgrounds are low-key greys, dull dark indigos, earth-greens. Figures are clothed in similar muted style with rare exceptions. Only the faces glow out of tissue-like webs of brush strokes, revealing their truths. They are profound but not without humour.

Woman and Her Dog shows an elderly woman of formidable strength of character, aristocratic disdain and illusionless gaze pushing her own feelings into control with one hand and holding her perfectly behaved pug into obedience with the other. It is a sophisticated, wonderful character study full of dry wit but never simplistic or caricatured.

Jaroszynska's use of line is sensitive, delicate, sinuous and accurate. It emerges to lightly, expertly indicate a form and disappears again into the web of brush strokes out of which these subtle, layered psychologies emerge.

HOUSEWORK, Joao Ferreira Fine Art Gallery, Cape Town. Tel: (021) 423-5403.

Margaret Vorster's collection of 16 paintings, based on a housework manual dating from the late 1930s, is utterly delightful. They are tranquil, intimate and delicate — housework as a metaphor for femininity — with a fabulous twist in the tale and the telling.

Reviews by ROBYN ELIOTT and HEATHER PARKER